




PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN
BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
JACKSON COUNTY, WI

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
RECEIVED: 03/17/2022 5:21:48 PM

BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION- FY 2022

<p>Primary Applicant (Name and Address):</p> <p>UScellular</p> <p>8410 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 700</p> <p>Chicago, IL 60631-3463</p>	<p>Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx. Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions.</p> <p>Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022, at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted.</p> <p>Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov</p> <p>Date: March 17, 2022</p>	
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>		
<p>Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>		
<p>Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)</p> <p>M. Austin Summerford</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>VP Business Development and Partnerships</p>	<p>Phone</p> <p>773-399-4850</p>
<p>Signature of Authorized Representative</p> 	<p>Date</p> <p>March 17, 2022</p>	



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SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name UScellular	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$1,934,760
Federal Employer Identification No. 36-4046814	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$1,314,840
Contact Name and Title Austin Summerford – VP Business Development & Partnerships	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$3,249,600
Telephone Number 773-399-4850	Project Name UScellular Jackson County Broadband Expansion
E-mail Address(es) Austin.Summerford@uscellular.com	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) 5G Fixed Wireless Broadband
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last-Mile
Grant Manager Contact Name	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations Jackson County, WI. County Board Chairman Ray Ransom, 307 Main Street, Black River Falls, WI 54615 FEIN: 39-6005703	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) UScellular proposes a Fixed Wireless Access expansion of broadband service in the Jackson County area delivering speed at a minimum of 100/20 Mbps to 308 currently unserved (< 5/1) and 526 currently underserved (< 25/3) homes and businesses by the end of 2023. Further, UScellular will also enhance speeds to 25/3 Mbps for an additional 903 currently unserved and 128 currently underserved homes and businesses in the Jackson County area. The infrastructure investments in this project will also significantly improve mobile service in the Jackson County area.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 100 Mbps *Actual speed may exceed 100 Mbps DL based on location.	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 20 Mbps
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 25 Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 3 Mbps



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<p>County or Counties served by this project</p> <p>Jackson County Area</p>	<p>Community or Communities served by this project</p> <p>Melrose, Franklin, Disco, Taylor, Alma Center, Merrillan, Hatfield , Rural lakes area in SW Jackson County.</p>
<p>List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve</p> <p>UScellular has identified the following broadband service providers providing some level of service in Jackson County: 1. CenturyLink, Inc. 2. Frontier Communications Corporation 3. TDS Telecommunications Corporation 4. Wisconsin Bell 5. Charter 6. Tri Comm Coop 7. Western Wisconsin Communications.</p>	
<p>Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in Section 1.4 of the application instruction? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no)</p> <p>No</p>
<p>For last mile projects or component, the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access).</p> <p>359</p>	<p>For last mile projects or component, the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access).</p> <p>4,063</p>
<p>Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <u>unserved</u>?</p> <p>29</p>	<p>Of the improved residential locations, how many are <u>unserved</u>?</p> <p>1,182</p>
<p>For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes. UScellular supports access to both Lifeline and the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)</p>
<p>Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes, the EBB program has now officially evolved into the Affordable Connectivity Program. (See above)</p>	<p>Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no)</p> <p>No</p>
<p>Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no)</p> <p>No, our 5G Fixed Wireless Access product was not available at the time.</p>	



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Summary of Project Budget and Funding Statement

Additional detail on project expenses is available in a non-Public forum for PSC use at its request.

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

Grant Summary

Grant Applicant: United States Cellular Corporation	Project: UScellular - Jackson County Broadband Expansion
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Budget

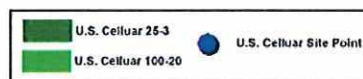
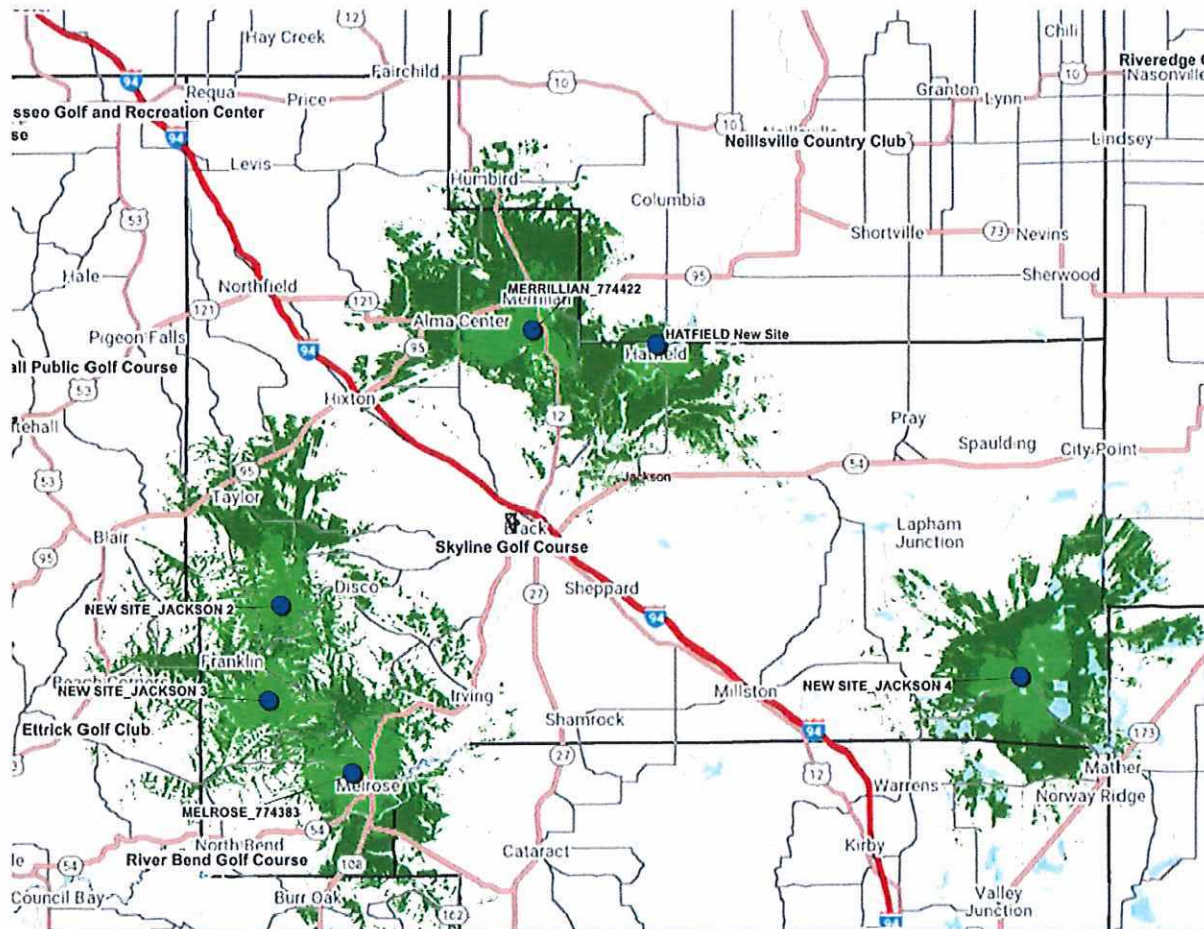
Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 312,420.00	\$ 208,280.00	\$ 520,700.00
2	Equipment	\$ 1,618,200.00	\$ 1,078,800.00	\$ 2,697,000.00
3	Supplies			\$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)			\$ -
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees	\$ 4,140.00	\$ 2,760.00	\$ 6,900.00
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other		\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Total:		\$ 1,934,760.00	\$ 1,314,840.00	\$ 3,249,600.00
				40.5% match requested

Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	UScellular	Applicant	Cash	\$ 1,289,840.00
2	Jackson County	Partner	Cash	\$ 25,000.00
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 1,314,840.00

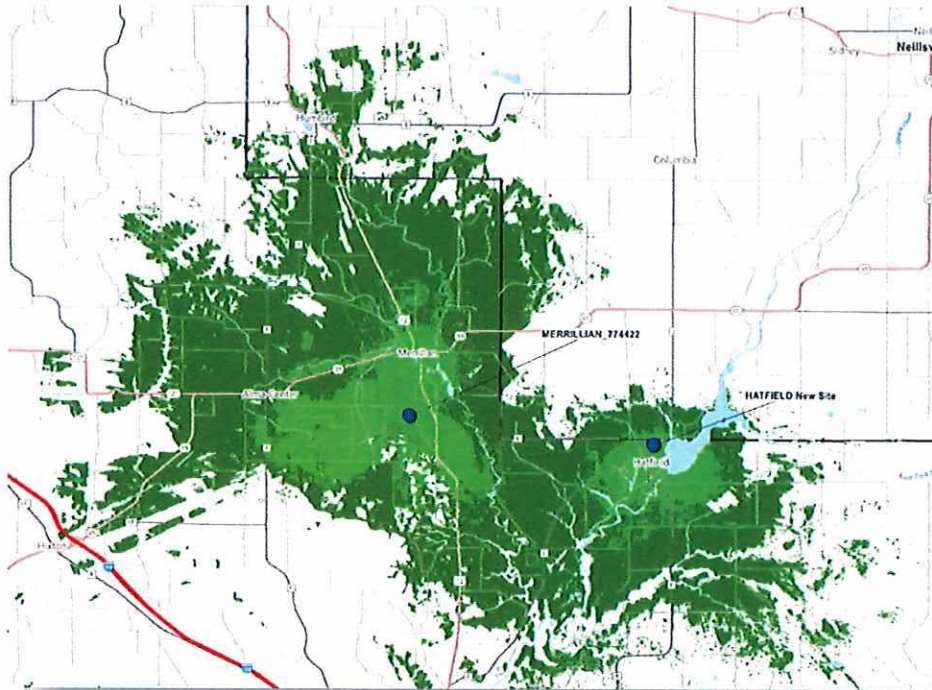
MAPS

The maps below depict UScellular's coverage to provide 100/20 (Light Green) and 25/3 Mbps (Dark Green). Blue DOTS represent cell towers, and new towers to be constructed as part of this proposal are labeled as NEW. Towers not labeled NEW are existing and will be upgraded with Mid Band Spectrum. The coverage will remedy the existing underserved and unserved areas with limited or no broadband.

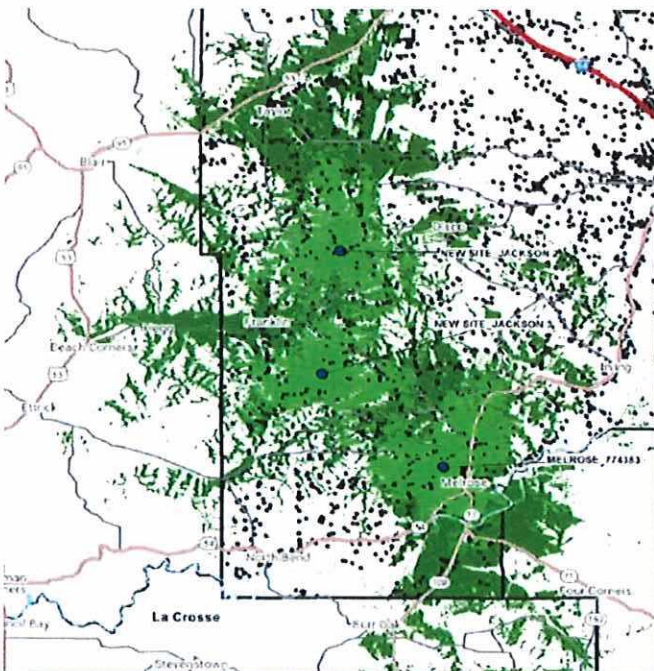


Project by Area

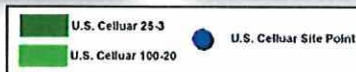
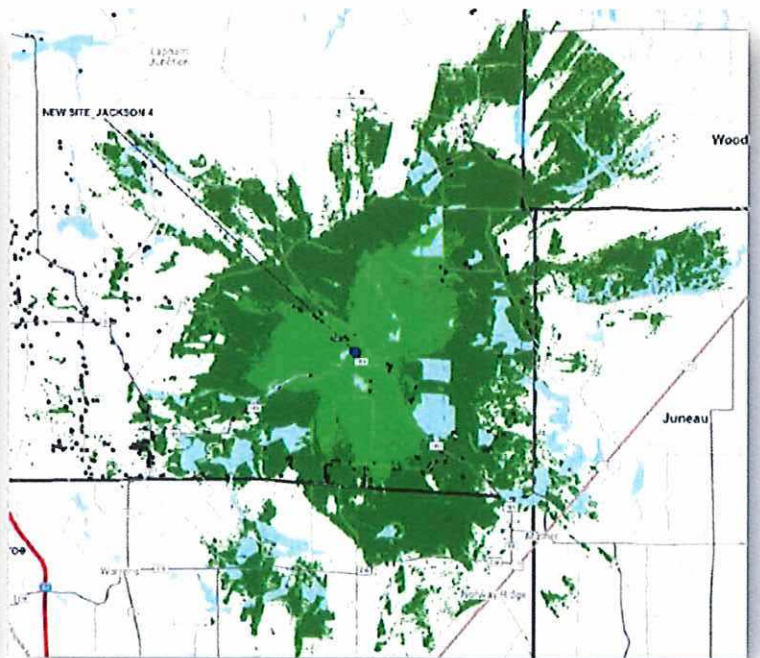
North Central



Southwest



Southeast



Mandatory Applications Requirements (Application Reference 3.2)

Applicant Identification and Contact Information (Application Reference 3.2.1)

The name and address of the entity applying for the grant, and the mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of one or more contact persons representing the applicant.	<p>Name: UScellular</p> <p>Address: 8410 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 700 Chicago, IL 60631-3463</p> <p>POC Name: Austin Summerford</p> <p>Phone: 773 399 4850</p> <p>Email: Austin.Summerford@uscellular.com</p>
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, the identity and contact information for all application partners.	<p>Jackson County</p> <p>POC Name: Ray Ransom, County Board Chairman</p> <p>Phone: 715-284-0258</p> <p>Email: Raymond.Ransom@co.jackson.wi.us</p>
The application must show that the applicant is an organization, a telecommunications utility, or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504(1).	UScellular confirms that it meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504(1).

Description of the Project (Application Reference 3.2.2)

UScellular is a leader in bridging the connectivity gap in Rural America. UScellular has over 1000 towers in Wisconsin and is actively advancing its 5G Technology.

Defining the Need. Based on Wisconsin PSC mapping, Jackson County's ongoing broadband evaluation and UScellular's analysis, many citizens of the county lack affordable access to 25 Mbps download/3Mbps upload internet speeds. In fact, many of the households in Jackson County have less than 5/1 Mbps DL/UL prohibiting them from participation in the benefits of our digital economy.

The lack of broadband restricts economic and business development essential to population and community growth. It also hinders remote education opportunities and emerging essentials such as telehealth.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for investment, creating urgency for innovative, fiscally responsible, and quick to deploy broadband improvement plans. In response, government programs, at various federal, state, and local levels, have created a great opportunity for public-private collaboration to address this situation.



Providing a Solution. At UScellular, our mission centers around connectivity. We have always focused on the needs of rural, often underserved, areas in rural America. We have begun to provide the latest 5G wireless technology across Wisconsin where it is economically feasible to do so. As in the past, when rural areas in America lacked universal access to electricity, the low population density in some areas makes it difficult to justify investment without government subsidies. We can fix this. Our technology, coupled with grant programs, enable us to close the digital divide regardless of how geographically dispersed the population may be.

Our solution begins with cell towers and then takes advantage of one of the most advanced elements of 5G technology, Fixed Wireless Access (FWA). It is a “last mile” solution that delivers broadband connectivity to homes and businesses in rural areas at reasonable cost and without the long timelines associated with the deployment of typical wired solutions.

FWA KEY BENEFITS:

- Broadband & Mobility
- Fast to Deploy
- Fiscally Responsible

The infrastructure investments used to provide FWA broadband also provide the important benefits of 5G mobile coverage – connecting people at home or work and on-the-go. The same areas that lack broadband access, also often lack mobile wireless coverage. In fact, CostQuest Associates predict the next digital divide will be getting 5G to rural America and a price tag for that is an incremental \$36

billion. It just makes good sense for rural America to get both remedies in one shot through wise infrastructure investing.

Our proposed investment project is \$3.2 million, consisting of two initial phases with completion as soon as the end of 2023. UScellular will continue to partner with Jackson County to explore future phases, particularly when the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding is finalized and becomes available. UScellular has also made other recent investment that support this area by acquiring of additional wireless spectrum which will be utilized in the proposed solution.

Static Map. (Application Reference 3.2.2.a)

The static maps and description of the areas of the State that will be affected by the proposed project are provided in Map section above.

25-3

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/vk3b3nee86yvgam/BB%20App%20UScellular%20Jackson%20County%20-%2025-3%20shapefiles.zip?dl=0>

100-20

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9e15la9qpp6vkyl/BB%20App%20UScellular%20Jackson%20County%20-%20100-20%20shapefiles.zip?dl=0>



Census Block. (Application Reference 3.2.2.b)

The PSC broadband map highlights many areas of Jackson County that we are proposing for improvements as unserved or underserved. This includes 248 square kilometers of unserved and 458 square kilometers of underserved geographies.

In addition, UScellular has evaluated the area through our license with CostQuest Associates, the data analytics firm engaged by the NTIA for broadband mapping. This analysis reveals that our project will provide coverage to 1,865 unserved and underserved locations.

Further, UScellular attached testimonial letters from residents of Jackson County on deficient broadband service.

An Explanation of Broadband Access Increase. (Application Reference 3.2.2.c)

UScellular will improve broadband access, using 5G Fixed Wireless Access, by constructing four (4) new cell towers, acquiring, and activating radios on Mid-Band Spectrum and providing access to advanced Customer Premises Equipment (CPE), designed specifically for rural applications.

Broadband Accessibility

Broadband Accessibility	
Potential and expected number of households served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.	4063 Unserved: 1182 Underserved: 628
Potential and expected number of businesses served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.	359 Unserved: 29 Underserved: 26
Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.	UScellular recognizes the importance of tourism in the region. Jackson County reports \$35 million of annual direct visitor spending with 525 tourism-related jobs, indicating a significant number of seasonal residents and tourists.
Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.	25/3 Mbps through 100/20 Mbps

Last/Middle Mile or Backbone. (Application Reference 3.2.2.d)

UScellular's project targets the last mile of broadband infrastructure.



Broadband Service Description. (Application Reference 3.2.2.e)

This UScellular project will deliver broadband by:

- 1) Enhancing elements of existing cell towers.
- 2) Building 4 new 250 foot cell towers.
- 3) Activating highly-reliable, licensed mid band spectrum.
- 4) Providing access to Customer Premises Equipment (CPE), specially designed for rural use.

Note: UScellular's statement of service reflects unserved and underserved households without any providers of 25/3 service. All other households are assumed to be served, even though the definition of unserved permits those being served by one provider. As such, the underserved households claimed are lower than the actual number that would benefit from this project.

Table: Project Phases and Statement of Benefits

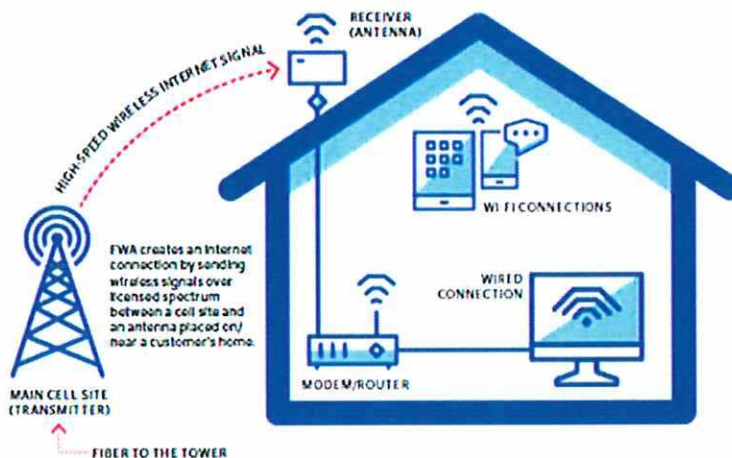
PHASE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT/OUTCOME
Phase 1:	<p>Specialized CPE will be available in Jackson County on the existing low-band spectrum network.</p> <p>Completed within 90 days of award.</p>	<p>UScellular will deliver Broadband Internet at minimum of 25/3 Mbps, covering a vast array of households.</p> <p>Speeds may exceed 25/3 Mbps in locations nearest the tower, and it's possible to attain 50/5 Mbps in some locations.</p> <p>These households are not counted in our project, which only counts locations covered by of Phase 2. These benefits are derived solely from launching new CPE on previously made UScellular investments</p>
Phase 2:	<p>Construct a total of four new cell towers at 250 feet.</p> <p>Acquiring and deploying radio equipment to activate mid-band spectrum on six towers. (4 new / 2 existing)</p> <p>Target Completion by 12/31/23 without unforeseen delays</p>	<p>UScellular will deliver broadband Internet at minimum of 100/20 Mbps covering 308 currently unserved (<5/1) and 526 currently underserved (<25/3) homes and businesses.</p> <p>Further, UScellular will deliver broadband Internet at minimum 25/3 Mbps for an additional 903 currently unserved and 128 currently underserved homes and businesses.</p> <p>This investment will also significantly improve mobile performance in the areas surrounding the towers.</p>
Future Phases	<p>To be developed and will be focused on where additional infrastructure is needed to further improve service.</p>	<p>Our solution provides improvement now and ongoing partnership with Jackson County over a multi-year period.</p>

Technology to be used.

Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) is a wireless solution for broadband connectivity for homes and businesses. An antenna on the home or business connects wirelessly to a nearby cell tower via a targeted wireless signal, providing high speed internet. The tower is connected to the internet through a combination of microwave and fiber technologies.

Once the signal is received by the antenna, an in-home router enables further connection to devices through WI-FI, just like a traditional wired connection works today. And, all of this is accomplished without the burdens of extended deployment times and complex laying of cables, rights of way, and pole connections.

UScellular's wireless broadband solution is above and beyond previous versions of fixed wireless internet service delivered in rural America that operate without carrier-grade standards and on unlicensed spectrum. In fact, UScellular FWA is delivered securely and reliably based on the adoption of the most advanced international standards and using our dedicated licensed spectrum. Only UScellular has access to the spectrum used in this project, allowing us to carefully control the user experience.



One of the most exciting aspects of FWA is the dual benefits investment in wireless infrastructure provides. For the investment made, citizens of Jackson County will receive both improved internet connectivity in the home and on-the-go. Our experience shows that people aren't satisfied unless they have both a quality home broadband and mobile broadband experience, and we don't believe they should have to choose one or the other. When applicants for the Emergency Broadband Benefit were given a choice between broadband at home or mobile cell phone broadband, 2/3 of eligible households chose a mobile solution, illustrating the need for affordable connectivity of all types.

The Benefits.

The combination of higher speeds for in-home/business broadband and better cell coverage on-the-go will produce numerous lifestyle and economic development benefits for the community.

Fixed Wireless Access Provides Three Key Benefits

1. Support for both Home Broadband and Mobility
2. Faster time to market
3. Lower cost to deploy



Project Schedule (Application Reference 3.2.2.g)

Table 5.2.7-1 Project Timeline

Project Phases	Timeframe
Phase 1: Upgrade	New CPE antennas and subscription plans will be launched within 90 days of grant award.
Phase 2: Expand	Final Design, Site Acquisition, Site Construction, Mid-Band Spectrum Activation, Testing will be completed by 12/31/23 assuming no unforeseen delays.

Itemized Budget (Application Reference 3.2.3)

Equipment Price List. (Application Reference 3.2.3a)

All towers and equipment would be wholly-owned by UScellular. The land on which each tower site sits may be owned or leased by UScellular.

Note: In addition to the summary of Project Budget displayed earlier on Page 3, this section requested an equipment price list. UScellular has filed a **“Confidentiality Request Form”** citing reasons for confidentiality. A detailed breakdown of project expenses will be available in a non-Public forum for PSC use at its request.

Intent to not Subsize. (Application Reference 3.2.3b)

All costs will be applied to the construction of the broadband infrastructure and will not be used to subsidize operating expenses or offset customers' monthly bills.

Application of Grant Fund. (Application Reference 3.2.3c)

UScellular will build four new Cell Towers and add new Mid-Band Spectrum radios spectrum to support our project.



Priority Factors Supporting the Application (Application Reference 3.2.4)

Matching funds. (Application Reference 3.2.4a)

UScellular and Jackson County are both committed to providing funding in support of this Broadband Expansion project. Attached is the resolution that supports the partnership commitments.

- UScellular Matching Funds Contribution: \$1,289,840
- Jackson County Contribution: \$25,000 (Intended Use – Broadband Adoption)
- PSC Broadband Expansion Grant Contribution: \$1,934,760
- Total project cost: \$3,249,600

In addition to the above contributions, UScellular recently invested in dedicated licenses for mid-band spectrum in an FCC auction that enable this project. Further, UScellular has committed consumer adoption support through offering free antenna installation and reduced equipment prices for early adopters.

Public-private partnerships. (Application Reference 3.2.4b)

How it came together: UScellular is excited to partner with Jackson County to improve broadband connectivity. We studied the past efforts of County work on Broadband and matched our projects to the greatest areas of need. We have met extensively with officials of the County and discussed their concerns pertaining to the lack of efficient broadband coverage. We understand the impact this has on the residents and businesses in the areas of commerce, education, and healthcare.

Identified Elements of Public Support from Jackson County:

- **County Resources** to understand community needs, including reviews of assumptions.
- **Chamber of Commerce** support for the business community.
- **County assistance in managing construction and operations costs** through streamlined permitting, supplier collaboration and site selection, negotiation, and lease assistance.
- **Digital Equity and Literacy-** proactive awareness campaigns, education programs and direction to federal assistance programs.
- **Financial contribution** to the broadband expansion program.

Identified Elements of Private Support from UScellular:

- **Build the Network.**
- **Provide targeted zones for towers to seek public land use.**
- **Establish a Broadband Support Hotline** for identifying ongoing community needs.
- **Provide communications to the county for stakeholder awareness.**



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- Provide a **range of highly competitive plans.**
- Provide **early adopter discounts to offset up-front costs.**
- Provide easy **access to federal programs**, such the ACP.
- Jointly **participate in community events** to accelerate adoption.

UScellular also engaged the insights of our independently owned agency, **Cell Plus II, and its owner, Andy Kamla, to understand how residents of Jackson County have traditionally received service.** Cell Plus II has served the Jackson County community for over eight years and has a significant amount of local knowledge of network performance both in the home and on the go. This research confirmed that improved broadband service is needed in Jackson County and builds upon Cell Plus II's ongoing commitment to improve service.



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Jackson County Resolution Letter

ORIGINAL

RESOLUTION 02-01-2022

RE: AUTHORIZING BROADBAND MATCHING FUNDS FROM AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS FOR BROADBAND EXPANSION IN TOWNS/VILLAGES LOCATED IN JACKSON COUNTY

WHEREAS, Various providers desire to commence projects consisting of the construction and operation of certain wireless and fiber optic communications services to provide the most advanced infrastructure to unserved and underserved residents in multiple Towns/Villages in Jackson County; and

WHEREAS, The Jackson County Board in recognition of the broadband underserved areas of its community, seeks to enter into a quasi-public/private venture to obtain, maintain and increase broadband coverage for the support of education, health care, growth of business, retention of existing business, tourism promotion, and overall economic vitality and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, The Jackson County Board desires to support Broadband Grants offered by and through the State of Wisconsin and Federal Entities; and

WHEREAS, Various providers are willing and able to partner with the Jackson County Board, Jackson County Towns and Jackson County Villages to provide the latest advancements in broadband coverage and to seek all available grants to provide and subsidize the cost of necessary broadband infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, The Jackson County Board desires to pursue and make application for any and all grant money available for broadband coverage with the assistance of these providers; and

WHEREAS, The Jackson County Board had previously approved providing matching funds in the amount of \$1,000,000 for an ARPA Broadband Access Grant in partnership with Bug Tussel Wireless which was not approved;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Jackson County Board authorizes and supports the application by Towns/Villages to the State of Wisconsin and Federal entities for Broadband grants in partnership with various providers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Jackson County Board will return the \$1,000,000 previously earmarked for the ARPA Broadband Access Grant, which was not approved, to the ARPA restricted fund; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Jackson County Board will, upon approval of any grant application greater than \$1,000,000, provide matching funds in the amount of \$100,000 in said Town/Village, up to \$1,000,000.

Executive & Finance Committee

Ryan J. Egan

Jeff Anderson

Ryan J. Egan
I HEREBY CERTIFY
RESOLUTION # 02-01-2022
WAS ADOPTED ON 11/13/22
BY JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

CINDY ALTMAN, JACKSON COUNTY CLERK
YES 18 NO 0
Resent: 1



Jackson County Executive & Finance Meeting Minutes

Executive & Finance Meeting – March 14, 2022

Members Present: Ray Ransom, Ron Carney, Jeff Amo, Roger Stevens, Karen Thayer.

Other in attendance: Susie Meinerz, Gaylord Olson, Chris Hovell, Rick Poff, Marianne Torkelson, Angie Shafer, Adam Olson, Duane Waldera, Carly Keller, Pheng Lee, Randy Bjerke, Jodee Brooks and Cindy Altman.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Ransom at 9:00 a.m.

Next meeting date will be April 11, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

County Board Minutes: Approved in February.

Proclamations

- a. April 2022 as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Motion Stevens/Carney to approve. Approved.
- b. Women in History Proclamation. Motion Carney/Amo to approve. Approved.

Resolutions:

- a. Approval of the Jackson County Land and Water Resource Management Plan Revisions. Motion Carney/Thayer to approve. Approved.
- b. Addition of one (1) FTE Community Health Worker (CHW) position. Motion Stevens/Carney to approve. Approved.
- c. Creation of one (1.0) additional FTE Economic Support Specialist. Motion Carney/Thayer to approve. Approved.
- d. Addition of one (1) FTE Dementia Care Specialist – Caregiver Coordinator (DCS-CC) position. Motion Amo/Stevens to approve. Approved.
- e. Addition of one (.80) FTE Administrative Clerk. Motion Stevens/Thayer to approve. Approved.
- f. Establishing Total Annual Compensation for Sheriff and Clerk of Court Pursuant to Wis. Stats. 59.22. Motion Thayer/Amo to approve the amended Resolution with the Clerk of Court having a 3% increase each year, contingent on Personal & Bargaining approval. Approved. Motion Amo/Stevens to adopt the amended motion. Approved.
- g. Extension Summer Intern Funding. Motion Stevens/Thayer to approve. Approved.
- h. Interim Zoning Administrator. Motion Amo/Carney to approve, contingent on Personal & Bargaining and Zoning approval. Approved.

Animal Shelter Update

- a. Discuss/Act Shelter Manager Project Employee Job Description. Motion Amo/Carney to approve amended description with law enforcement certification to be preferred, not required. Approved.

Discuss/Act on partnership with JC Childcare Task Force for Workforce Innovation Grants: Marianne Torkelson, on behalf of the Jackson County Childcare Network, presented a proposal for a partnership with Jackson County to apply for childcare grants. Jackson County would only act as the fiduciary for the grant funds. Corporation Counsel Bach's written recommendation was read. Motion Amo/Carney to approve provided an agreement can be reached. Approved.

Corporation Counsel Report: Sam Bach provided a written report.

Report from Department: IT, VSO, Court System, Medical Examiner: Pheng Lee provided a written and verbal report. Randy Bjerke provided a written and verbal report.

Strategic Planning Updates: A new individual with CEDA is working on marketing the Highway campus. Broadband moving forward with a 3/17 grant deadline.

Discuss/Act American Rescue Plan Funds:

- a. US Cellular matching funds (\$25,000). Motion Stevens/Amo that Jackson County supports and approves matching funds of \$25,000 provided US Cellular makes a successful grant application for Broadband in Jackson County. Approved.
- b. Hilbert Communications LLC and its subsidiaries. Motion Amo/Carney providing Jackson County support for the grant application of Hilbert Communications LLC and its subsidiaries. Approved.
- c. BRF Rentals – air conditioning units (\$24,000). Motion Carney/Thayer to deny. Approved.

Discuss/Act State of Emergency Declaration: Motion Amo/Stevens to declare an end to the State of Emergency effective April 1, 2022. Approved.

Seminar Request: None

Financial Updates: Year End Updates. Motion Thayer/Stevens to approve Budget Entry. Approved.

Audit Bills and Line-Item Transfers: Motion Carney/Stevens to approve the bills. Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 am.



Existing broadband service. (Application Reference 3.2.4.c)

UScellular's submission reflects unserved and underserved households without providers of 25/3 service. All others household are assumed to be served, even though the definition includes those being served by one provider, thus our projections of underserved locations improved is conservative.

Provide a list of all landline broadband service providers (DSL, cable or fiber to the home) and fixed wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed broadband project.

CenturyLink
Frontier Communications
TDS Telecommunications
Wisconsin Bell
Charter
Tri County Communications COOP
Western Wisconsin Communications

- Estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing landline and fixed wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.

Based on our analysis, UScellular's project area would provide additional services to 2557 households that currently have access to speeds above 25/3 Mbps and those speeds range from 25 Mbps DL to 1Gig DL.

- Provide a list of mobile wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed project.

- Bug Tussel
- Country Wireless

- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing mobile wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.
- *Our analysis shows that no current fixed wireless providers reliably offer speeds at or above 25/3 Mbps. Cost Quest Associates, the data analytics firm engaged by the NTIA for broadband mapping, shows that our project will provide coverage to 1211 unserved and 654 underserved locations per the definitions of service provided by the PSC.*



Project impact. (Application Reference 3.2.4 d)

Project Area:

- Our project area includes the Southwest, Southeast and North Central portions of the county including the communities of Melrose, Franklin, Disco, Taylor, Merrilan, Hatfield, and the rural lakes region area in SW Jackson County.
- The households to be served are 4,422. Jackson County is highly rural with population density at **only 19 people per square mile**. This low density of population makes Fixed Wireless Access, coupled with mobile broadband, a fiscally responsible and effective solution.
- The county's largest employer is the Ho-Chunk Nation which employs 3,100 people. UScellular's project will improve broadband service for a portion of this population.
- Given the intermittent consistency of service, coupled with aggressive consumer pricing, UScellular estimates robust service adoption.

Service Offered:

- 5G FWA broadband will bring enhanced speeds of 100/20 Mbps to much of the unserved and underserved population within the County and improvements far beyond 5/1 Mbps to those suffering with that level of service.
- To say the residents of Jackson County want this enhanced service is a gross understatement. In fact, they need this to fully experience American life as we know it today. This is supported by the volume and nature of comments from Jackson County citizens.

UScellular Plans:

- UScellular plans to provide an Unlimited Broadband plan, with speeds of **25/3 Mbps starting at \$30/month**, with automatic payment.
- Further UScellular plans to provide an additional Unlimited Broadband plan with speeds of **100/20 Mbps starting at \$55/month**, with automatic payment.
- For households eligible to enroll in the federal **Affordable Connectivity Program**, after discounts, the 25/3 Mbps plan will be delivered at essentially no charge, after the \$30 federal subsidy, to the end user.
- UScellular also provides access to mobility plans – for broadband on the go.

Scalability. (Application Reference 3.2.4 e)

- FWA broadband is scalable. Utilizing additional radios, towers, and spectrum, (e.g. UScellular's significant high-band spectrum holdings), UScellular could expand capabilities and offerings as technology and customer demands evolve.
- The evolution of wireless services is ongoing and significant. There is every reason to believe that 5G will continue to evolve in its capabilities, and wireless researchers are already on the path towards development of 6G.
- UScellular will also continue to work with Jackson County to ensure that our offerings meet consumer demands.

Economic development. (Application Reference 3.2.4 f)

The UScellular project will stimulate economic development in Jackson County.

The rural areas of Jackson County are desirable for livability and economic growth except for the lack of broadband service availability. From the census period of 2010 to 2020, the total county population grew from 20,828 to 21,245, however the major town of Black River Falls declined, indicating the uptick in rural areas. To maintain population growth, and the associated tax base, in these desirable rural areas, broadband enhancement is needed.

Investment in broadband and mobility infrastructure creates jobs.

According to Deloitte Consulting, "a 10-percentage-point increase of broadband penetration in 2016 would have resulted in more than 806,000 additional jobs in 2019, or an average annual increase of 269,000 jobs. Moreover, we found a strong correlation between broadband availability and jobs and GDP growth. A 10-percentage-point increase of broadband access in 2014 would have resulted in more than 875,000 additional US jobs and \$186B more in economic output in 2019."¹

1 - <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/consulting/articles/bridging-the-digital-divide-with-broadband-for-all.html>

In addition, broadband drives economic development through:

Education. UScellular's solution is suitable for conducting video learning, online research, and meetings through all contemporary mediums, such as **Zoom and Microsoft Teams**. We have a proven track record of providing higher throughputs than alternative satellite services and DSL, commonly found in rural areas, which will allow teachers to extend **learning both in and out of the physical classroom**. Our comprehensive view of connectivity extends beyond the school or home. Imagine a teacher taking a class outside to learn about local plant life and students having the ability to research what they are seeing on a wireless device.

Remote Work. As flexible work locations continue to become the norm for many businesses, reliable, high-performance internet is essential to maintaining **productivity and employment**. Traditional urban dwellers are moving at rapid pace to smaller communities, often with lower costs of living, but only where there is supportive infrastructure. For employers, reliable connectivity solutions establish **confidence in remote working arrangements**, reducing the need for premature return-to-work decisions and increased employee satisfaction. For employees, it provides the security and assurance that they can perform their responsibilities and continue to contribute to the workplace irrespective of location.

Telehealth. The widespread need for reliable broadband provides the foundational connectivity layer to **drive telehealth adoption** to improve health outcomes. Our solution enables the advent of telehealth taking advantage of video consultations and high-resolution imagery sharing.

Precision Agriculture. Additionally, the mobility aspect of our solution is important for all of the above AND emerging work in **precision agriculture**, location **tracking of high value assets**, and more Internet of Things options essential to the farming community.

Economic impact the project could have for an individual business located in the project area.

Today's society is heavily dependent upon reliable connectivity of all types. The recent pandemic accelerated the general understanding that areas in rural America were not ready to "work from home," receive care through "telehealth" and enjoy other aspects of a fully-connected lifestyle.

Suddenly, access to the internet became a primary criterion for where people chose to work and live. Rural communities that were ready benefited from a mass migration of people from large metro cities to sometimes rural, easy to live in, communities. This began to draw the direct line between broadband availability and home prices, and the associated tax base they provide.

Quality of education is often also tied closely to property values. Digital connectivity also plays a foundational role in the education system. The benefits of internet access & remote learning, combined with the best in classroom teachers were already moving fast, but entered the high-speed lane over the pandemic year.

All of the above also applied to business effectiveness. Businesses use various platforms for communication between staff, customers, and partners. Digital communication is essential for daily operations in-house or remote.

How an improved download and upload transmission speed could better support a specific business in the project area.

Please see the following notes from three prominent Jackson County businesses - a winemaker, Chris Hardie, at Brambleberry Winery, Robert Knourek, the president of AKB Tooling, Inc. and Shirley Wagner of Wagner Family Farms



"We struggle with the 3MB DSL service – the faster that is available to us – because it is unreliable and often comes in at even slower speeds. This slow connection speed makes it difficult – often impossible - to communicate with Zoom or other digital meeting platforms. It is also frustrating when our credit card transaction occurs online, and we have to explain to customers that we cannot take cards because our internet service is down." Chris Hardie

"Business success and growth is dependent on reliable and affordable internet service, as it allows us to complete nearly all aspects of operations. We are located in an area with little to no cell service and right now our only option is satellite Wi-Fi. We use Viasat with 12 Mbps speeds. Internet presence is essential to compete in this market, as well as to provide fast service to our customers." Robert Knourek Jr.

"We have an on-farm business, Wagner Family Meats, and our current internet service is not reliable and hard at times to accept credit card payments at our store. As with many businesses, a lot of our ordering is done on-line. For our farm all our cow records are entered in our on-line program, which we always need accessible to our Organic Certification Company. Yes, we are rural, but it would be impossible to have the type of businesses we do in a non-rural area. Reliable fast internet is much needed in the Jackson County area." Shirley Wagner

Likely impact improved broadband service could have on residential property values.

This is best summarized by the comments of Melrose, WI resident Marla Hanley, who said,

"The choice shouldn't be location or internet. The lack of speed and inconsistency has influenced people moving to the area. Our previous neighbors listed their home and as expected had quite a few showings. On two occasions, the prospective buyers decided to not make an offer despite the fact that the home was the right fit, financially and functionally. The problem in one case was that there were three school aged children the parents were anxious to enroll, but they worried that the internet speed would be an issue for schoolwork. The second couple loved the house and location but didn't feel they could make an offer because she was a nurse who needed reliable internet service to connect to the hospital."



How improved broadband service to a residential portion of the project could benefit a telecommuting population.

As flexible work locations continue to become the norm for many businesses, reliable, high-performance internet is essential to maintaining productivity and employment. Traditional urban dwellers are relocating to smaller communities, often with lower costs of living, but only where there is supportive infrastructure. For employers, reliable connectivity solutions establish confidence in remote working arrangements, thereby reducing the need for premature return-to-work decisions and increasing employee satisfaction. For employees, it provides the security and assurance that they can perform their responsibilities and continue to contribute to the workplace irrespective of location.

These comments from a resident of Melrose, WI emphasize the opportunity better broadband will provide:

"My daughter and son-in-law live in Chicago. One works for software development company, the other a construction project manager. Due to the pandemic, they both worked remotely from a small condo in Chicago. While they would love to re-locate to a rural area like Jackson County, that's not possible given their reliance on broadband. This spells trouble for rural townships. If young families cannot pursue careers that are increasingly dependent on remote work schedules, our tax base and rural way of life is at risk."

"My wife recently applied for an Adjunct Faculty position at Western Technical College (WTC) in La Crosse, WI. On the morning of the final interview, our unreliable internet service went down. She grabbed our laptop and drove 25 miles to West Salem to use my parents reliable Wi-Fi and successfully obtained the position. As a faculty member at WTC, she is required to participate in a ZOOM meeting each Tuesday morning. The Internet to my wife is not just a place to highlight what she had for lunch on Facebook, but a require condition of employment." Dan Ciechanowski

Bree Lien, of Melrose WI, commented,

"Currently, I have the option of continuing to work from home remotely 1 -2 days per week. Considering rising gas prices, it would be ideal to take advantage of this opportunity. Unfortunately, the lack of internet access restricts me from being able to do this." Brie Lien

How the speeds and service being offered by the project fits with current and future economic needs of the community and local businesses.

The UScellular solution is not only efficient and effective, but it is also affordable. As the technology continues to evolve, we are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind. If there



is reliable coverage, then local businesses and other community organizations and residents will be able to perform daily tasks that are dependent on broadband service.

Please see the demonstration of commitment in the effective and affordable plans, below, that UScellular will provide.

Communication will be more effective and fluid without gaps of coverage during calls, video conferences, events, etc. Our society is deeply rooted in today's technological advances and it's important that everyone can leverage them.

Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas. (Application Reference 3.2.4 g)

Our broadband services would not interfere or impair other service providers in adjacent areas.

Supporting Information

Broadband Grant Experience (Application Reference 3.2.5 a)

Broadband Grant Experience Type	Project
Broadband Grant Project(s) Status	<p>Examples:</p> <p>Empower Rural Iowa Emergency Broadband Expansion Program (NOFA #003)</p> <p>UScellular was tasked to modernize its network across 47 cell sites in rural Iowa. This network modernization initiative delivers a minimum throughput of 25 DL / 3 UL Mbps wireless broadband services across 578 census blocks identified as Targeted Service Areas in 27 counties. Including areas outside of the Targeted Service Areas, the modernization of these sites projected to provide over 3,330 sq. miles of broadband service coverage and broadband availability to almost 37,000 Iowa Households.</p> <p>Nebraska (NUSF) Ongoing Relationship</p> <p>U.S. Cellular requested NUSF support for ten (10) separate and discrete projects and sought approximately \$4.7 Million in support. U.S. Cellular committed to meeting or exceeding technical requirements of the program and provided a match to lower the cost of construction.</p>
Broadband Non-Grant Funded Projects	<p>Janesville, WI- Home Internet Plus</p> <p>In 2021, UScellular designed and implemented a Fixed Wireless Access broadband solution in this Wisconsin community utilizing high-band mm Wave spectrum bringing speeds of 300 Mbps DL via a new product called Home Internet Plus.</p>



Tailored Broadband Infrastructure (Application Reference 3.2.5 b)

UScellular will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure. The households submitted are for the unserved and underserved only. They do not include any additional areas outside of that. However, all areas within coverage will benefit although they are not being submitted as part of this application.

Financial Stability (Application Reference 3.2.5 c)

- UScellular is a \$4 billion company, with over 5 million customers, publicly traded and in good standing.
- UScellular has a long-standing commitment to being a technology leader in Wisconsin.
- Additional information on UScellular's financial position is included in the investor relations section of its website (www.uscellular.com).

Remote Healthcare Accessibility (Application Reference 3.2.5 f)

Telehealth is changing the nature of healthcare and health outcomes as we know it. More healthcare providers are now faced with delivering not only a high level of care, but also reliability of service when practicing remotely. This is particularly challenging in rural areas, such as Jackson County.

- **Mobile Healthcare is evolving.** \$250 billion of U.S. healthcare spend could be virtualized.
- **Remote Healthcare today.** More than \$1 billion virtual healthcare visits happen each year.
- **Home Care is rising.** 10,000 seniors turn 65 in the U.S. each day; most desire to remain in their own homes as they age.

UScellular offers healthcare organizations of all types the ability to provide remote healthcare for patients through reliable internet connections. This includes internet for in-home virtual visits, online consultations, remote patient outreach and remote monitoring. Home Health teams can securely gather and share patient intake data with a broader care team including specialists and primary care physicians.

Reva White, of Melrose commented on healthy lifestyle habits in peril,

"We can't opt for telehealth care. I utilize a fitness streaming service for physical activity. Because streaming this for 30-40 minutes per day would quickly use our data allotment for the month, I utilize the "bonus zone" time period where we are allotted extra data. I wake up around 4am to get my workout in without using our regular data. On days where I've opted to stream later, the video gets stuck at "buffering" for so long I end up shutting it off." Reva White



These comments of Darrel L Stoen, a licensed A-EMT, demonstrate the need for connectivity both as a provider (EMT) and a patient seeking local care.

"I rely on the internet for continuing education to maintain my licensure. Since the beginning of the pandemic, approximately 90% or more of my education has been through video conferencing. This has been extremely difficult given our low internet speeds. This has also been the case during virtual healthcare visits with my physician."
Darrel L. Stoen

Wisconsin remote Healthcare example:

An extension of UW Hospital and Clinics operates a full in-home health care solution. They employ traveling medical staff that work with patients in homes. A combination of broadband in home and mobility allows them fully remote, secure communications back to the hospital, ensuring timely care. GPS tracking is also used for scheduling, safety, and accurate billing.

Remote Educational Access (Application Reference 3.2.5 g)

Jackson County has multiple school districts within its boundaries with hundreds of students enrolled. The following describes broadband accessibility in each of the school districts. Hundreds of students in Jackson County School Districts do not have internet at home to complete schoolwork. This highlights the need for both access and affordability, both covered in UScellular's project.

Melrose-Mindoro

- 12% of students do not have internet access at their primary residence. 83% say it is due to lack of availability, 15% due to affordability.

Blair-Taylor

- 11% of students do not have internet access at their primary residence. 52% say it is due to lack of availability, 27% due to affordability.

Galesville-Ettrick-Tempealeau

- 25% of students do not have internet access at their primary residence. 77% say it is due to lack of availability, 22% due to affordability.

Our project will enable teachers to extend learning both in and out of the physical classroom. Imagine a teacher taking a class outside to learn about local plant life and students having the ability to research what they are seeing on a wireless device.



These comments reflect the importance of broadband in education:

Jeffrey S. Eide, School Superintendent in the Blair-Taylor School District says this:

"During the pandemic, we needed to shift to learning from home and this was no small feat. Blair-Taylor purchased 90 hotspots to cover as much of our rural area as possible, and we purchased the equipment needed to allow every classroom to connect and communicate remotely, however, hotspots are only as good as the cellular reception available. There were times when we had over 70 students out on quarantine and the challenges faced with supporting distance learning were challenging to say the least." Jeffrey S. Eide

Troy Webb, Black River Falls School Board said,

"The last two years broadband access has become a necessity. Our schools, businesses, and medical clinics have left many isolated and unable to function due to lack of access to digital services or instruction. The largest district in Jackson County, Black River Falls School District, purchased over 200 cellular hotspots in an attempt to keep students connected during virtual instruction. This attempt still left many students underserved as there is not enough cell coverage to serve every student. In order to keep our county, and Wisconsin as a whole, competitive, people need reliable high-speed internet with adequate coverage." Troy Webb

Yvonne J Johnson Stuhr said it well,

"In order from our children to succeed we need to have access to reliable internet and the ability to process information timely." Yvonne Stuhr

Brie Lien, of Melrose WI, said,

"Currently, we have no internet providers in our area, aside from satellite internet. We did attempt this type of service and it was horrible, resulting in our cancellation. During the pandemic, we needed access to internet for working from home and for my children to be able to participate in online school. We were unable to do this. This resulted in having to take time off work and not completing schoolwork." Brie Lien

Reva White, of Melrose, said,

"When schools went virtual in spring of 2020, we attempted to join virtual learning at home. My first concern was her participating in that for an hour at a time would quickly eat away the limited data on our HughesNet Plan, and they inhibit me from being able to effectively participate in virtual work later in the month. We have satellite internet because at home we have no cell service, so we are unable to connect to mobile data of any kind." Reva White



Public-Private Partnership Details (Application Reference 3.2.5.h)

See above section on the same

UScellular's focus on "Locally Grown Wireless" empowers community action and is evident in these additional elements of Public Private Partnership in Jackson County:

UScellular Community Connections: Supports donation to local organizations.

UScellular Jason Learning: Supports Classroom Projects

UScellular HotSpot to Low Income Households: \$13million nationally, to bridge the digital divide providing access to internet for students.

UScellular Gro Events: Community event sponsorship.

UScellular American Red Cross: Disaster Assistance

Contribution of Other Items

UScellular associates will conduct exercises in digital literacy for Jackson County residents at the request of county officials. These exercises may be done in coordination with community events as it makes sense. There will be no charges for this service.

Letters of Support (Application Reference 3.2.5 i)

Please see the letters supporting our grant application at the end of this application, along with reasons why an award is essential to the ongoing health of the Jackson County communities. This residents and business leaders seek support from the state and county to rectify the current challenges of being underserved/unserved customers by current service providers.

Equitable Factors (Application Reference 3.2.5 j)

Technical Support/Training

- **UScellular offers industry leading customer support through technical chat and 800# telephone communications. Our technical support teams are in domestic care centers across America.**
- **Our Wisconsin based, Public Sector Account Team will help to simplify technology adoption and recommend ongoing solutions for better visibility and increased control over operations.**



- **UScellular maintains a full-service retail location in Black River Falls. Our award-winning associates are highly knowledgeable about this project. They will assist all residents universally, regardless of financial means, with technical questions regarding their service.**
- **UScellular will utilize our Mobile Experience Vehicle (MEV) to bring a portable store to local community events, host educational sessions on connectivity and provide products on location.**

Promotion of Broadband Adoption is Equitable

UScellular's commitment to broadband adoption has 3 components:

- **Affordability**
 - Highly competitive subscription plans for broadband service.
 - Access to federally funded Lifeline and Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) benefits.
 - A suitable subscription plan will be available for eligible ACP households at zero cost after autopay and ACP monthly subsidy.
 - ACP eligibility begins at 200% of the poverty level (4-person household income of \$53,000 or less) The median household income in Jackson County is \$53,650.
- **Acquisition**
 - Activating service at any of our conveniently located retail stores, including our store in Black River Falls.
 - Arranging community demonstration and activation days in the community using our Mobile Experience Vehicle (Store on Wheels) for the same.
 - Providing monthly promotional adoption credits to offset acquisition costs including "free antenna installation" and monthly equipment discounts.
- **Public Private Partnership**
 - Jackson County has already committed \$25,000 to the promote adoption, literacy, and equity, which may include adoption credits administered by the county, and education sessions to promote internet use. Jackson County has also resolved that upon a grant award of greater than \$1 million, it will contribute an additional \$100,000. to this project. Resolutions presented earlier in this application.



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN
BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
JACKSON COUNTY, WI

ATTACHMENTS (Supporting Letters)

Letter of Support from WI Senator Jeff Smith



JEFF SMITH

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR – 31st DISTRICT



March 15, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Review Panel Members,

As you consider applications for the 2022 grant cycle of the Broadband Expansion Grant Program, I hope you will consider US Cellular's grant application to provide fixed wireless service to Jackson County. This project will have a positive impact on Jackson County and western Wisconsin as a whole.

Jackson County is woefully behind other counties in Wisconsin for broadband expansion efforts. According to Forward Analytics, Jackson County ranked 71 out of 72 counties for broadband access.

US Cellular has a strong track record in Wisconsin for providing cellular and internet service throughout the state. They recognize these areas are in need of assistance, both through working hard to expand broadband access and through serving those already in their service area.

US Cellular will be installing four new fixed wireless towers and upgrades to current towers to provide internet service to the southwest and southeastern portions of the county and just north of Black River Falls. Jackson County is a beautiful and valued part of the state. This project's success will create more opportunity for our community by helping our students and businesses access high-speed internet.

I am proud to represent Wisconsin's 31st Senate District, and I am committed to the betterment of Wisconsin as a whole. Jackson County is a great place to live and raise families. US Cellular has a strong dedication to Wisconsin and I hope you will strongly consider their application for the Broadband Expansion Grant Program.

Sincerely,

JEFF SMITH
State Senator
31st Senate District



Letter of Support from Cell Plus in Black River Country



March 11, 2022

Subject: Letter of Support for US Cellular for Grant

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Black River Area Chamber of Commerce I am writing in support of the proposed grant that US Cellular is applying for. Rural quality of life and economic development is dependent on reliable, and affordable cell phone and internet service.

US Cellular and the authorized agent, Cell.Plus has been in the community for many years. They are a strong supporter of the community. The Black River Area Chamber of Commerce has been a customer for five years. We have been very happy with the service they provide but we recognize the need to expand into rural areas so that there is more coverage. US Cellular through the authorized agent Cell.Plus provides service to many people who live in very rural areas of Jackson County.

The Black River Area Chamber of Commerce promotes local member businesses and we handle tourism promotion in Jackson County. Our website www.blackrivercountry.net has between 4,000 – 8,000 visits on average each month and our Facebook page (Explore Black River Country) has over 17,000 followers. We use our website and Facebook page to spread information to visitors and residents.

There are more than 15,000 people living in Jackson County and we welcome tens of thousands of visitors to Jackson County each year. Our area is an outdoor recreation lover's paradise. Based on numbers from the Wisconsin Department of tourism for 2019, there was \$35 million in direct visitor spending which helped sustain 525 tourism related jobs in Jackson County. One of the top priorities for visitors and residents in Jackson County is the ability to connect to the internet so they can use their GPS, find attractions, restaurants and places to shop. Visitors and residents struggle to get a good connection in rural areas of Jackson County including at Lake Wazee, the Black River State Forest, on the ATV/UTV trails and other rural attractions. They also need reliable cell phone service in rural areas.

For these reasons, it is critical that US Cellular receives this grant to provide more towers in rural areas of Jackson County.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me at 715-284-4658 or at amandagunn@blackrivercountry.net. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Amanda Gunn
Executive Director
Black River Area Chamber of Commerce



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN
BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
JACKSON COUNTY, WI

Letter of Support from the Blair-Taylor School District



Blair-Taylor School District

N31024 Elland Road • P.O. Box 107 • Blair, WI 54610 • www.btsd.k12.wi.us

BLAIR-TAYLOR ADMINISTRATION

Jeffrey S. Eide
Superintendent
608.989.2881
Fax: 608.989.2451

Dana T. Eide
7-12 Principal
608.989.2525
Fax: 608.989.2451

Lynn Halverson
K-6 Principal
608.989.5835
Fax: 608.989.2451

March 12, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Ms. Powell Coker,

I am writing in support of the proposed US Cellular Broadband Access Grant for Jackson County which will bring 5G service and minimum internet speeds of 25/3 to the homes of students in the Blair-Taylor School District who live in the town of Springfield.

Blair-Taylor covers about 190 square miles and the Township of Springfield resides in our school district. Blair-Taylor is a 6 month to 12th grade United Campus. We have approximately 630 students in our school district and we are approximately 47% with free and reduced students. Recently, through a referendum, the Blair-Taylor community supported additional classroom space, a baseball field, and a child care center to support students' and parents' needs.

During the pandemic, we needed to shift to learning from home or distance learning, and this was no small feat. Blair-Taylor purchased 90 hotspots to cover as much of our rural area as possible, and we purchased the equipment needed to allow every classroom to connect and communicate remotely; however, hotspots are only as good as the cellular reception available. In addition, we allowed parents to use the wifi in the parking lot when students were quarantined or if the school was not in session. There was also wifi outside of our local library unless the library was open. Although we did our best to support parents' wifi needs, our hills and valleys did not allow all parents in our rural area to stay connected.

Unless our staff lived in an area that had fiber optic or strong connectivity, we needed to support many of our teachers with their wifi needs. Once again, we used hot spots to accomplish this task. We were fortunate to be in person throughout the pandemic, but there were times when we had over 70 students out on quarantine and the challenges faced with supporting distance learning with some students learning from home and others in school was challenging to say the least.

BOARD MEMBERS

Troy Terneson, President

Jeffrey Stalheim, Director

Dr. Blake O. Kozlowski, Director

Patty Kujala, Vice President

Sarah Staff, Treasurer

Michael Steen, Director

Dave Thomason, Clerk



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN
BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
JACKSON COUNTY, WI

My wife and I live in the country, and we have attempted to use satellite and hotspots, and I can personally say that these are not our best options for good connectivity. These items allowed us to connect, but they are not dependable and they are very expensive. You can only imagine the challenges faced by parents who are just trying to provide for their families. Teaching and learning are difficult enough; however, teaching and learning with poor connectivity exacerbate closing gaps and strengthening learning.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me at 608-989-2881, ext 300, or ej@btsd.k12.wi.us. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Elde".

Jeffrey S. Elde
Blair-Taylor, Superintendent



Letter of Support from Black River Falls School Board Member

March 14th, 2022

Grant Administrator for Rural Wisconsin

Subject: Letter of Support for Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Project

To the administrators of this grant,

I am writing in support of the proposed Jackson County Broadband Expansion Project. Modern life is dependent on fast, reliable, and affordable internet service. As residents of rural Jackson County, we expect digital equity with those living in larger communities.

The last two years broadband access has become a necessity. Our schools, businesses, and medical clinics have left many isolated and unable to function due to lack of access to digital services or instruction. The largest district in Jackson County, Black River Falls School District, purchased over 200 cellular hotspots in an attempt to keep students connected during virtual instruction. This attempt still left many students underserved as there is not enough cell coverage to serve every student. In order to keep our county, and Wisconsin as a whole, competitive, people need reliable high speed internet with adequate coverage.

If this proposal from US Cellular is funded, better access will improve our life and well-being. Communicating online is crucial for our community.

I highly recommend the proposal from US Cellular to expand broadband access in Jackson County Wisconsin. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me at troy.webb@brf.org.

Thank you for your consideration,

Troy Webb

Black River Falls School Board Member



Letter of Support from Cell Plus in Baraboo, WI



CORPORATE OFFICES
507 Berkley Blvd., Baraboo, WI 53913
608-356-4000



March 11th, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

Cell.Plus II, Inc. is a local independent Authorized Agent for UScellular, serving in Wisconsin for over 27 years and specifically in Jackson Co. for over 10 years with our physical retail store located in Black River Falls. Our store leaders have been so happy and blessed to serve in this community, being well engaged with the wireless needs of individuals and businesses in the County. Cell.Plus serves as the conduit between the unmatched wireless network of UScellular and the specific local needs of the customer.

The growth of wireless High Speed Internet access has been excellent for our customers where there is adequate wireless signal, and the adoption has grown. Also, with UScellular service being part of the Affordable Connectivity Program, this has helped many individuals. However, there is a tremendous need for better coverage in underserved areas where our service is desired, yet the signal is too weak or non-existent.

With this Grant and the ability to expand further into Jackson Co. at a rapid rate would undoubtedly be a blessing to so many, and Cell.Plus will be the boots on the ground to personally assist in providing the best experience to residents and businesses across the county.

Please see attached letters from area leaders, of personal testimony to the services of UScellular, Cell.Plus, and the need for increased coverage.

Best Regards,


Andrew Kemla

Owner/President

andy@cellplus.com

info@cellplus.com
cellplus.com

"Cell.Plus exists because we believe in
the POWER of human connection."



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN
BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
JACKSON COUNTY, WI

Letter of Support from Cell Plus in Black River Falls



BLACK RIVER FALLS
Nancy Stevens, Manager
715-284-5105



March 14, 2022

Subject: Support for UScellular Broadband Expansion Grant

To Whom it May Concern:

I have lived in Jackson County for my entire life and have worked for UScellular through an Agent location for over 12 years, the last 8 years for the current Cell.Plus Agent location. I am the Store Manager of the Cell.Plus location in Black River Falls, WI. We focus on keeping people connected through all avenues of life (work, school, entertainment, and loved ones). The pandemic made it obvious that our county and the communities within it, lack what now is considered a basic need.

We still have many areas within the county that do not have access to reliable, dependable, or affordable internet. Many of the rural households depend on the houses of family or friends or a community spot in town like the library to have access to dependable internet to be able to work on homework/school projects. When the pandemic was declared in 2020 most of these options were no longer viable for the students of the districts in Jackson County. We saw many of these families come into our store to see if what we offered would be an option for the remote learning and working from home, that was now a necessity. There were many people that we had to turn away due to the UScellular coverage in their rural area not being sufficient to meet the needs these families now had. Some had 3 or more students trying to do remote learning along with parents working from home, video calling to loved ones and streaming services since everyone was at home.

I was on the board of directors at the library at the time the pandemic was declared, and we made sure we kept the Wi-Fi on and accessible, even though it was closed, so people could sit in their cars outside the library and take care of things they needed internet for. Working or doing remote learning in a car is not an ideal scenario, but this situation and similar ones were the only options available to many.

There are many people that run businesses out of their homes in the rural area and the lack of reliable, affordable coverage can be detrimental to them. They sometimes lose business based on only being able to process credit card transactions sporadically, missing important emails, and not being able to attend virtual meetings and seminars that are necessary to grow their business.

609 State Hwy 54, Ste 200
Black River Falls, WI 54615
cellplus.com

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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN
BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
JACKSON COUNTY, WI



BLACK RIVER FALLS

Nancy Stevens, Manager
715-284-5105



As a store manager I depend on people being able to reach me various ways throughout the day. I sometimes have google meetings that I need to attend on my days off. My mom has many health issues and I'm her caregiver. Her specialists are 1 hour away so sometimes a virtual Dr. appointment is the best option instead of traveling. If I lived outside of the city limits, I would struggle to be able to perform my job and take care of my mom's needs sufficiently.

Jackson County is a great place to live with beautiful scenery and plenty of outside things to engage the community and the visitors. I grew up in the rural area of Jackson County and as much as I loved it, I have said many times that I wouldn't leave the city limits nowadays, based on the lack of reliable coverage for internet.

I support and highly recommend the proposal from UScellular to be awarded the grant and bring better, reliable internet coverage to the people within the county that have come to rely on it for their day-to-day living. It is crucial for the growth of the members of these communities.

Feel free to reach out if any additional information is needed.

Thank you,

Nancy Stevens
121 W 3rd St
Black River Falls, WI 54615
715-259-3402
Cell.Plus Store Manager

609 State Hwy 54, Ste 200
Black River Falls, WI 54615
cellplus.com

"Cell.Plus exists because we believe in
the POWER of human connection."



Letter of Support from Wagner Family Farms

March 12, 2022

Subject: Letter of Support for US Cellular Grant

To Whom it May Concern.

We have an on-farm business, Wagner Family Meats, and our current internet service is not reliable and hard at times to accept credit card payments at our store. We also have problems with our cell phone to receive and make calls. That is the number we use for our business. It makes it very hard if someone wants to find out if we are at our store if they need to pick something up on their way home from work. This summer we are getting flyers to all the local campgrounds to advertise coming to the farm to buy their meats with our cell phone as the contact number. We always have our fingers crossed that it works!! As with many businesses, a lot of our ordering is done on-line.

For our farm all our cow records are entered in our on-line program, which we always need accessible to our Organic Certification Company.

As you can see, we do use the internet and cell phone for our livelihood. Yes, we are rural, but it would be impossible to have the type of businesses we do in a non- rural area. Reliable fast internet is much needed in the Jackson County area.

Sincerely,

Shirley Wagner

Wagner Family Farms

N5228 Cloverdale Road

Black River Falls, WI 54615

715-299-2607



Letter of Support from a Melrose, WI Resident

March 11, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Ms. Powell Coker,

I am writing in support of the proposed US Cellular Broadband Access Grant for Jackson County. I hope you will consider the three anecdotes below as you make your decision on this Grant Application.

Employment Equity. My wife recently applied for an Adjunct Faculty position at Western Technical College (WTC) in La Crosse, WI. No hardcopy paperwork was transferred WTC and NO In person interviews were conducted. In fact, on the morning of the final interview, our unreliable internet service went down. Kay grabbed our laptop and drove 25 miles to West Salem to use my parent's reliable WiFi and successfully obtained the position. As a faculty member at WTC, she is now required to participate in a ZOOM meeting each Tuesday morning. The internet, to my wife, is not just a place to highlight what she had for lunch on Facebook; but required as a condition of employment.

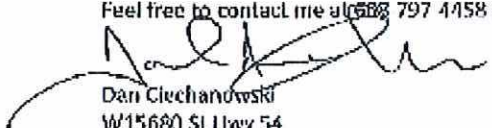
Medical Care. I recently had a physical at Mayo Clinic in Onalaska and on my way out the door the desk clerk asked me if I was willing to receive future consultations via the internet? My father, who has a heart condition, has pacemaker data transferred remotely via the internet to his cardiologist. I believe these two examples highlight the future of health care delivery. Insurance companies will increasingly force ZOOM physicals and healthcare delivery in an effort to reduce costs. It's a good thing my dad doesn't live on Eorio Road or Sandberg Road in the Township of North Bend where bandwidth speeds max out at 9 mb/s if they exist at all. His data might never make it to the cardiologist.

Urban vs Rural.

My daughter and son-in-law live in Chicago. One works for a software development company; the other a construction project manager of a multi-million dollar facility in California. Due to the pandemic, they both worked remotely from a small condo in Chicago for nearly two years. While they would love to relocate to a rural area like Jackson County, that's not possible given their reliance on broadband. This fact spells trouble for our rural townships. If young families cannot pursue careers that are increasingly dependent on remote/blended work schedules, our tax base and rural way of life is at risk.

I strongly support the US Cellular Broadband Access Grant for Jackson County. Residents in Jackson County deserve to have the same access to jobs, education, and medical care that individuals who live in urban areas have. As the price of gas continues to rise, our rural townships will be required to rely on the internet more than ever for delivery of goods and services. Please approve the Jackson County Grant Application!!!

Feel free to contact me at 608 797 4458 or dkciech@gmail.com if you require additional information.


Dan Ciechanowski
W15680 St Hwy 54
Melrose, WI 54642



Letter of Support from a Melrose, WI Resident

March 13, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker,
Secretary to the Commission North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way Madison, WI 53705

Ms. Powell Coker,

I am writing in support of the proposed US Cellular Broadband Access Grant for Jackson County. Please consider the following in making your decision in this grant application.

Permanent Exhaust That's the term used to describe our internet situation here at Eorio Road. My download speed of .40 Mbps and upload speed of .22 Mbps is pretty standard here. On the occasion that the internet goes out entirely, I have had the opportunity to speak with various individuals who have attempted to rectify the situation. And, each of them offered "permanent exhaust" as an explanation. Because our cell phone service is through our inconsistent and unpredictable WiFi, we have a landline for dependability in case of an emergency. As you can imagine, the cost of both services is one of our greater household expenses. I understand for those who reside in more populated areas that it isn't easy to relate to our situation, so let me provide an example. We were without internet service 14 days in August 2021. While our provider compensated us for the lack of service, it doesn't take away the fact that because we choose to live in a rural area, our service is considered regretful but not something requiring immediate attention.

The Choice Shouldn't be Location or Internet The lack of speed and inconsistency has also had an effect on people moving into the area. Our previous neighbors listed their home and as expected had quite a few showings. On two occasions, the prospective buyers decided not to make an offer despite the fact that the home was the right fit both financially and functionally. The problem in one case was that there were three school-aged children the parents were anxious to enroll in the Melrose-Mindoro School District, but they worried that inconsistent and slow internet speed would be an issue for their children when it came to schoolwork. A second couple- though they loved the house and location- didn't feel they could make an offer because she was a nurse who needed reliable internet service to connect to the hospital. People wanting to move to rural areas should not have to make a choice between location and internet speed.

A Virtual Deal Breaker My husband, an elementary teacher, and I, a high school English and Speech teacher, are retired. We've talked about the fact that had we been teaching during the pandemic we would have had to go to our respective schools because our current internet service would've made it impossible to communicate virtually with our students. I know this to be true as I have attempted two virtual visits with my doctor. Both "visits" were riddled with problems ranging from no picture, frozen screen, moving lips but no sound, or sound without faces. Virtual visits are becoming commonplace and can provide easy and accessible contact between patients and medical staff. But, without consistent internet service, people in rural areas will lack those convenient and necessary medical opportunities.

I strongly support the US Cellular Broadband Access Grant for Jackson County. Residents in rural areas deserve the same services as those in urban areas. By improving broadband access, people choosing to reside in rural areas will not have to make a decision between location and internet speed and consistency.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at mjhanley79@gmail.com or 608-797-7744. Respectfully submitted,

Marla R. Hanley
N2253 Eorio Road
Melrose, WI 54642



Letter of Support from a Melrose, WI Resident

3/11/2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way Madison, WI 53705

Ms. Powell Coker,

I am writing in support of the proposed US Cellular Broadband Access Grant for Jackson County, which will bring 5G service and minimum internet speeds of 25/3 to my home. Modern life is dependent on fast, reliable, and affordable internet service. As a resident of Southeast Jackson County, I expect digital equity with those living in larger communities and this opportunity is a game-changer for my area.

Our current internet provider is Centurylink. The bandwidth speed varies and is not consistent. Only one person can be on a device at a time. During quarantine periods our son was to participate with online learning via Zoom. He was not able to use any camera for the teacher to see him or for him to view the classroom. We are not able to participate in Zoom/Skype meetings. My husband requires internet to log in and out of work at the start of his shifts. Many days he is not able to due to the internet strength. I have the option to work from home but am unable to due to the internet speeds available. In addition

to the slow internet the cell reception is also minimal. We have purchased a booster and at time we are able to use a hot spot with our cell phones

If this proposal from US Cellular is funded, this will not only provide better access and improved lifestyle but also improve the safety of the residents in the dead zone areas. We have two households and a horse sanctuary/rescue. Due to the lack of service in the area the 2nd dwelling is not able to have a landline or internet servicer due to "exhaustion" in the area. If an incident were to occur on our 20-acre property the only access to phone would be our landline in one of the dwellings.

Our current download speeds:

- o Download: 395 kbps
- o Upload: 197 kbps
- o Latency: 72 ms

I am highly in support of the US Cellular Broadband Access Grant for Jackson County. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach me at 608-386-3928 or jesszeman@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully, Jessica Zeman
N2143 Mighty Maples
Melrose, WI 54642